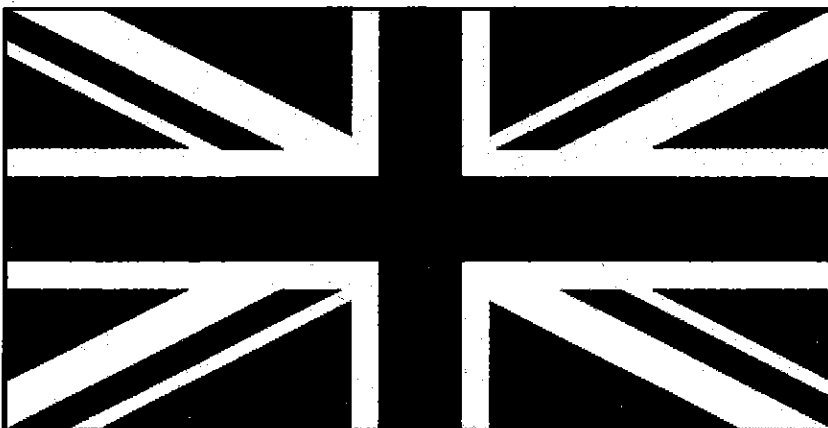


Norfolk's
American

Connections: RAF

Sculthorpe

Alice Hare (Age 16)



List of Images (From top L-R)

- Spyflight Op. Jui-Jitsu Available at: <http://www.spyflight.co.uk/sail.htm>
(Accessed: 23/11/2012)
 - Flagspot (2003) United States of America Available at: <http://flagspot.net/flags/us.html> (Accessed: 26/11/2012)
 - Spyflight Op. Jui-Jitsu Available at: <http://www.spyflight.co.uk/sail.htm> (Accessed: 23/11/2012)
 - Woodlands-Junior British Flag - The Union Jack (Union Flag) UK
Available at: <http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/geography/unionjack.html> (Accessed: 26/11/2012)
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Page 7: List of Images (2) (Aircraft Flown by
USAF Pilots Stationed at Sculthorpe)

Page 8: RAF Sculthorpe Today

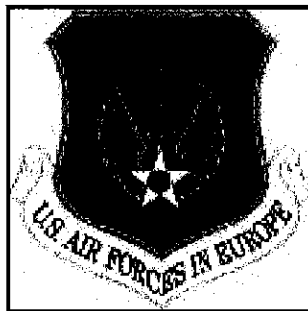
Page 9: List of Images (3) (RAF Sculthorpe
Today)

Section 1 – Background: Location, Set-Up and World War Two

“The biggest operational airfield in the U.K. by 1957, carrying 10,000 personnel and at one time the biggest atomic bomber base in Europe. The airstrip is said to be one of the longest heated airstrips in the world”.¹ Such was RAF Sculthorpe in its prime; however for the last twenty years, it has stood derelict. Yet how did RAF Sculthorpe make such a dramatic turnaround, and what was it like in its heyday?



i) RAF Sculthorpe sign, with the *USAF in Europe* emblem in the middle



ii) The *USAF in Europe* emblem

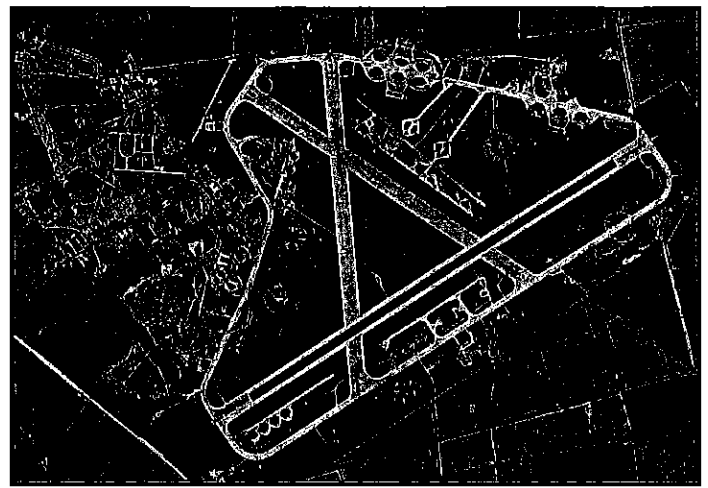
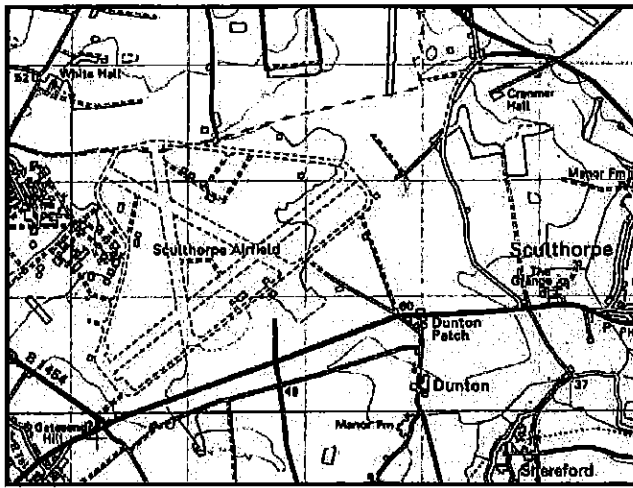
Situated between the villages of Sculthorpe and Syderstone, three miles west of Fakenham, work started on RAF Sculthorpe in spring 1942, and the airbase – “a standard Royal Air Force Bomber Command station”² - was completed in May the following year. The site, laid out in the shape of an “A”, boasted three concrete runways; the main runway of length 2,000 yards, the two smaller runways of length 1,400 yards.³

Throughout 1943, the base was home to French and Antipodean squadrons, and it was not until January 1944 that American pilots came to Sculthorpe. At that time No. 214 Squadron of the RAF and crews from the USAF 96th Bomb Group were stationed together at RAF Sculthorpe for three months.

¹ Global Security (2011) *RAF Sculthorpe: United States Nuclear Forces* Available at: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/facility/sculthorpe.htm>

² English Heritage: PastScape (2007) *Sculthorpe Airfield* Available at: http://www.pastscape.org/uk/hob.aspx?hob_id=1409221

³ RAF History (2005) *Bomber Command 60th Anniversary* Available at: <http://www.raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/s27.html>



iii) & iv) Two maps showing the location of RAF Sculthorpe

Section 2) American Connections: The Cold War

Starting in May 1944, Sculthorpe underwent preparations to be turned into a Very Heavy Bomber Base. This involved removing all the runways and laying down more hard-wearing, 300 feet wide ones⁴. After the development, which was completed in spring 1946, “the main 00-18 was 3,000 yards long and the others both 2,000 yards”⁵. It was not until the outbreak of the Berlin Crisis in 1949 that RAF Sculthorpe became an operational base again. From 1949-52, the USAF Strategic Air Command inhabited Sculthorpe.

After becoming an official USAF Base in January 1951, in May the following year the 47th Bombardment Wing and the 49th Air Division arrived at Sculthorpe, where they would stay for ten years⁶. 1954 saw the arrival of another squadron – the 19th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron⁷ – to add to the 47th Bombardment Wing’s three it already had at Sculthorpe. The three initial squadrons flew B-45 Tornado tactical bombers, and the fourth flew the reconnaissance aircraft RB-45. The 47th Bomb Wing came to Sculthorpe in 1952 because by this time the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which was set up in May 1949, its purpose being to uphold the “peacetime defence of Western Europe”⁸, was becoming increasingly threatened by Soviet expansion, and introducing the B-45 to Britain was a way of quelling this threat since it spread nuclear resources throughout the whole of the West rather than just concentrating them in the USA.

⁴ 28 Days Later (2012) *RAF Sculthorpe, Norfolk* Available at:
<http://www.28dayslater.co.uk/forums/showthread.php/71767-RAF-Sculthorpe-Norfolk-May-2012>

⁵ RAF History (2005) *Bomber Command 60th Anniversary* Available at:
<http://www.raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/s27.html>

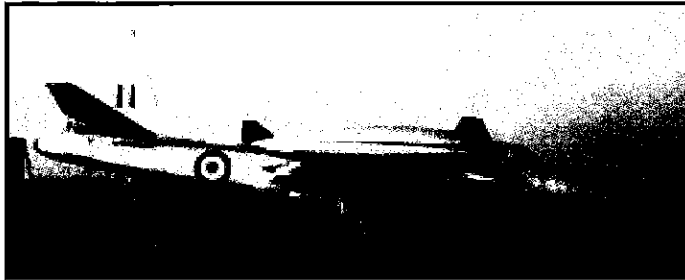
⁶ Wikipedia (2012) *RAF Sculthorpe* Available at:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_Sculthorpe

⁷ Wikipedia (2012) *RAF Sculthorpe* Available at:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_Sculthorpe

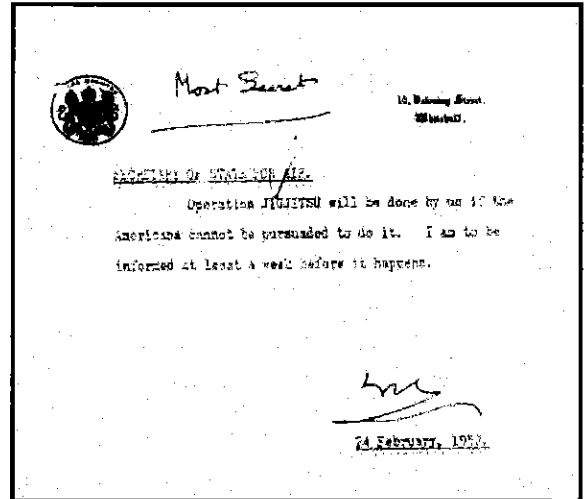
⁸ Gaddis, J.L. (2005) *The Cold War*. New York: The Penguin Group.

Section 3) The Later Cold War: Operation Jiu-Jitsu and Project Clearwater

In an attempt to overcome President Truman's ban on over-flights, in July 1951 Operation Jiu-Jitsu was launched from Sculthorpe. Flights started in 1952 and continued for two years, involving four American RB-45s being disguised as RAF planes and flying over the Soviet Union, taking photographs as they went. Project Clearwater was launched in 1962 and ceased bomber deployments to Sculthorpe and a number of other RAF bases⁹.



v) An RB-45 at Sculthorpe disguised as an RAF plane



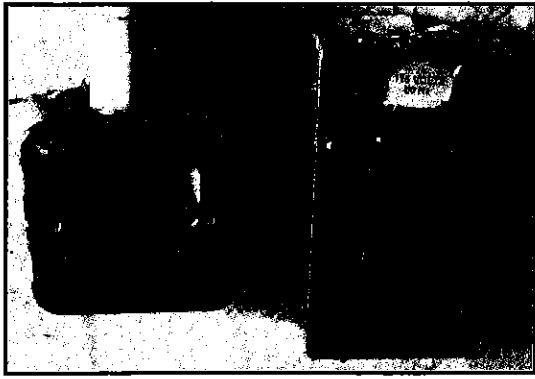
vi) Winston Churchill's letter confirming the execution of Operation Jiu-Jitsu

Section 4 – RAF Sculthorpe Today and Conclusion

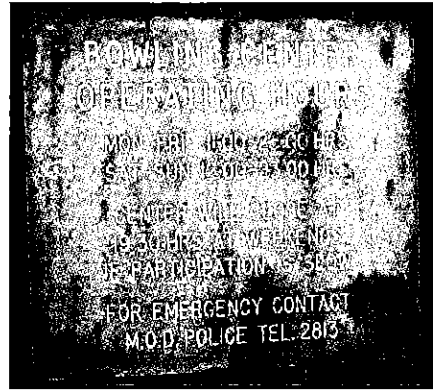
Throughout the 1980s RAF Sculthorpe housed a number of USAF squadrons whose home bases were under development. 1992 saw the closure of RAF Sculthorpe, and in the mid-1990s the majority of the housing on the site was sold, and now forms a housing estate known as Wicken Green¹⁰. Apart from a small industrial park, the remainder of the base is still owned by the MOD and is used for army helicopter training exercises. However, the traces left by American occupation still remain: a sign of the strong relationship forged between RAF Sculthorpe and the USAF for some forty years.

⁹ Wikipedia (2012) *RAF Sculthorpe* Available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_Sculthorpe

¹⁰ Global Security (2011) *RAF Sculthorpe: United States Nuclear Forces* Available at: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/facility/sculthorpe.htm> (Accessed: 4/11/12)



v) & vi) - **Small signs of American occupation:** v)
American plug sockets can still be seen today at
the site



vi) Notice the American spelling of 'centre'

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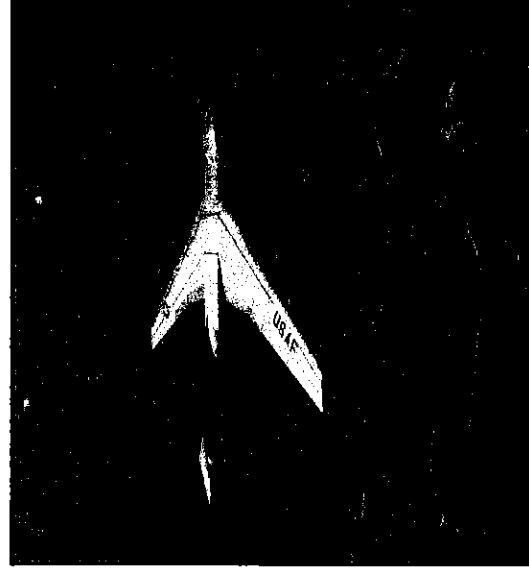
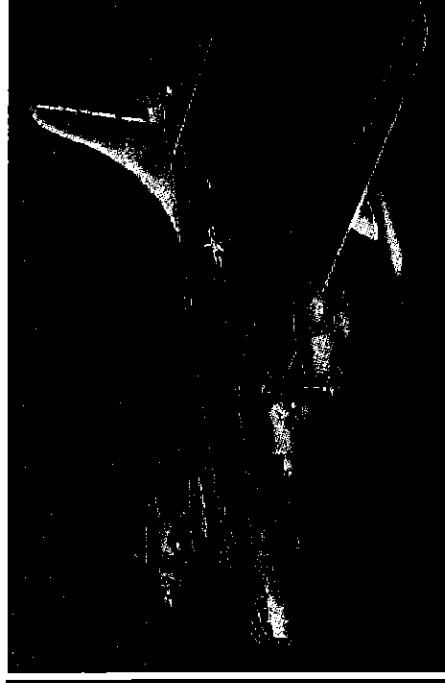
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List of Images (1)

- i) RAF Sculthorpe (2012) *RAF Forum* Available at: <http://rafforum.activeboard.com/t50395951/raf-sculthorpe/> (Accessed: 3/11/2012)
- ii) http://dc390.4shared.com/img/qf-XBvhn/s7/USAF_in_Europe.jpg (Accessed: 3/11/2012)
- iii) RAF History (2005) *Bomber Command 60th Anniversary* Available at: <http://www.raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/s27.html> (Accessed: 23/11/2012)
- v) Global Security (2011) *RAF Sculthorpe: United States Nuclear Forces* Available at: http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/facility/images/sculthorpe_1953.jpg (Accessed: 3/11/2012)
- vi) Spyflight *Op. Jiu-Jitsu* Available at: <http://www.spyflight.co.uk/scul.htm> (Accessed: 23/11/2012)
- vii) Spyflight Available at: *Op. Jiu-Jitsu* <http://www.spyflight.co.uk/scul.htm> (Accessed: 23/11/2012)
- viii) 28 Days Later (2012) *RAF Sculthorpe, Norfolk* Available at: <http://www.28dayslater.co.uk/forums/showthread.php/71767-RAF-Sculthorpe-Norfolk-May-2012> (Accessed: 3/11/2012)
- vi) Flickr from Yahoo (2009) *Bowling Centre: RAF Sculthorpe* Available at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dmcl/3360164676/> (Accessed : 4/11/2012)

Word count (excluding bibliography and foot notes): 807 words.

Aircraft Flown by USAF Pilots Stationed at Sculthorpe

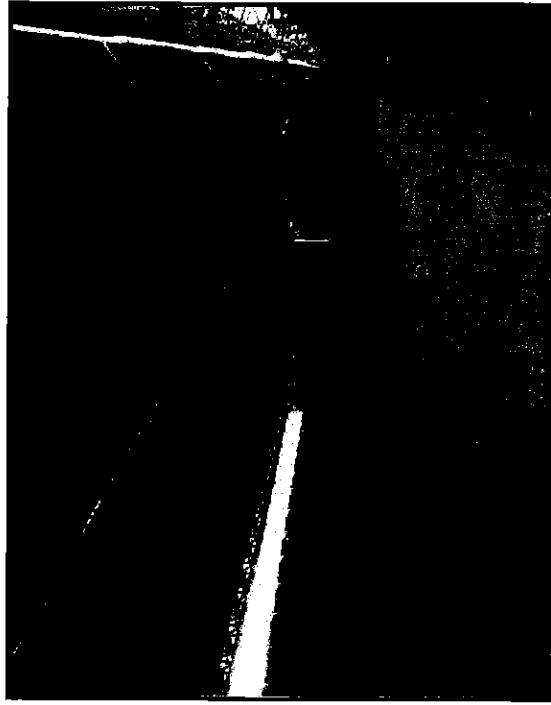
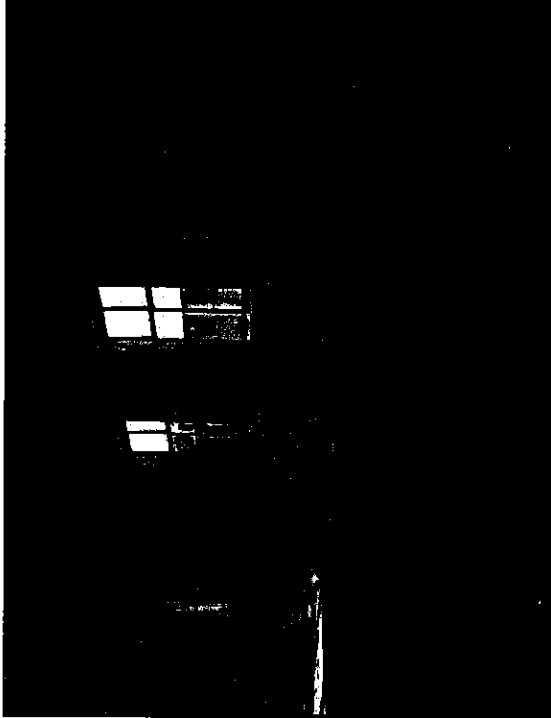
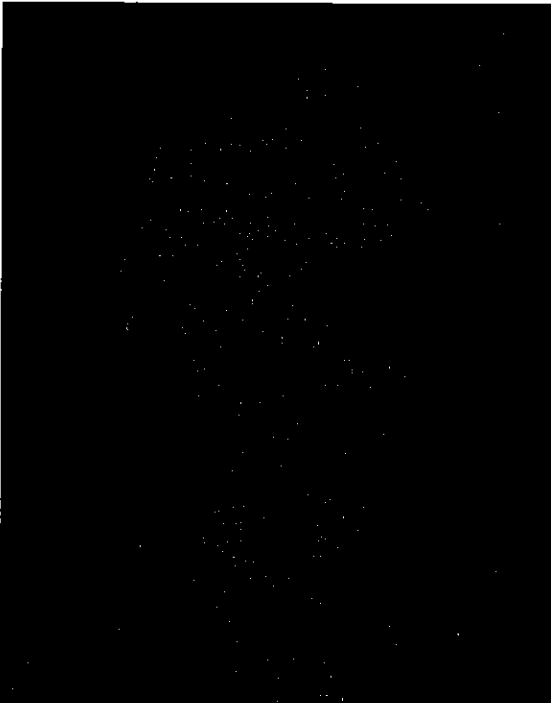
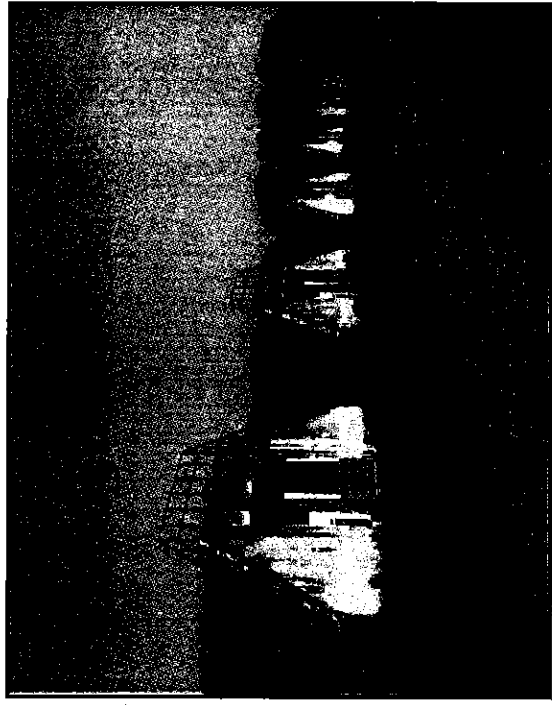
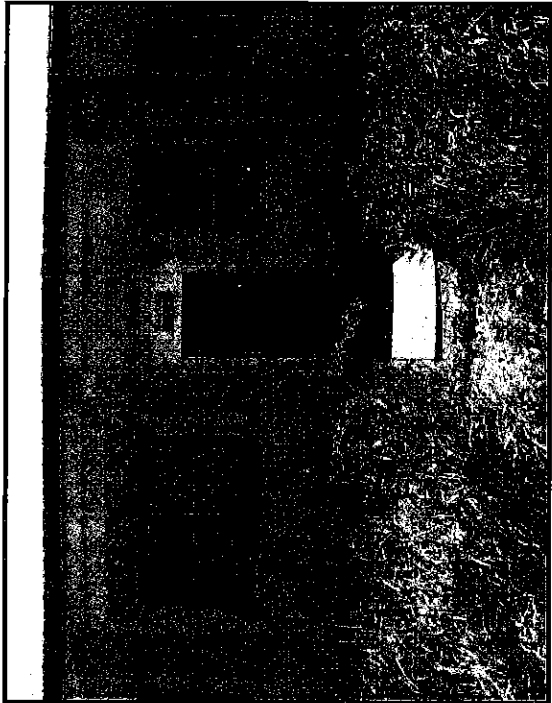


**From top (L-R): B29 Superfortress, B50, B-45 Tornado
Tactical Bomber, RB-45, RB-66, B-66 Destroyer.**

List of Images (2) (Aircraft Flown by USAF Pilots Stationed at Sculthorpe)
(From top L-R)

- Wikipedia (2012) *Boeing B-29 Superfortress* Available at:
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<https://www.fas.org/irp/program/collect/rb-66.htm>
- Wikipedia (2012) *Douglas B-66 Destroyer* Available at:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_B-66_Destroyer

RAF Sculthorpe Today



From top (L-R): the MOD Police Station, the control tower before the machinery inside it was completely removed, the bomb stores, the 'exchange' (grocery shop), the nursery, and one of the hangars before demolition

List of Images (3) (RAF Sculthorpe Today) (From top L-R)

- 28 Days Later (2012) *RAF Sculthorpe, Norfolk* Available at:
<http://www.28dayslater.co.uk/forums/showthread.php/71767-RAF-Sculthorpe-Norfolk-May-2012>
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<http://www.derelictplaces.co.uk/main/showthread.php?t=23882>
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